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STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

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Road Work Ahead

Detours, delays and orange cones mean better roads are ahead, and we're seeing a lot of them in the 17th Senate District! I recently asked the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) and all of our county highway commissioners to summarize their road construction and maintenance projects for this year. I am happy to announce that there are 58 projects worth more than \$85 million planned for our communities in 2018.

One of the most frequent requests I receive from constituents is to "do something" about the roads. These 58 projects are part of the answer.

Overall, we will see 29 state highway projects and 29 county and local projects. The state is spending \$83,600,608 in the 17th Senate District. I don't have a full accounting of the county and local spending, but it is significant.

Iowa County has the most projects going on with 15 different projects worth at least \$19 million. Five are state projects and 10 are county or local projects. Grant County residents will see 11 projects, four state projects and seven county or local projects with at least \$7 million. Richland and Sauk Counties each have seven projects, mostly with state investments around \$7 million. Juneau County will see six projects, including a major bridge replacement on Hwy 82 over the Wisconsin River into Adams County. Juneau County's projects are worth more than \$23 million this year! Lafayette and Monroe Counties have four state projects and one local project worth at least \$1.5 million each.

(See Attached Table – 17th Senate District Road Projects 2018 - For Detail)

During the last state budget, we increased transportation aid for towns by 8.5% and dedicated \$40 million more to General Transportation Aids (GTA) which fund road maintenance and projects for counties and municipalities. This is 9.5% more than they received last year. We also increased local bridge program funding by \$7.5 million annually.

I recently asked the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) for data to show the real impact of the GTA increase in our counties. The average GTA impact in the 17th Senate district is an 11.8% increase! The average increase is worth approximately \$100,000 to each of our counties. This is a significant increase for our communities!

(See Attached Table - General Transportation Aid by SD 17 County - For Detail)

One of the worst roads in the 17th Senate District, State Highway 154 between Loganville and the Richland County line, was scheduled for resurfacing in 2020 or later. I worked with the Governor and DOT to move the project up to 2018 because Hwy 154 is one of the worst roads in the 17th District.

I also led the charge, with several other rural legislators, to divert funding to rural Wisconsin from the mega projects in southeastern Wisconsin. I know infrastructure is important to our big cities, but it is just as important for other parts of the state. The bottom-line is that we need to address problem roads in rural Wisconsin and we need to focus our attention where it is most needed. I think that 58 projects in our communities, including Hwy 154 and three bridges along Hwy 80 near Rock Bridge, demonstrate that our money is where our mouth is.

I will continue to monitor the road projects in the 17th District and am working with the DOT to move projects along that are critical to our local infrastructure. I think it is helpful for someone who drives the roads and talks to residents to provide input to the folks in Madison or LaCrosse who are making the plans. A road looks a lot different from behind the wheel than it does on a sheet of paper.

As I drive hundreds of miles around the 17th Senate District this summer, I will try not to grumble at the detours, delays and barricades because I know that better roads are on the other side. I hope you will give our hard working crews a friendly wave and recognize the progress we are making on our rural roads.

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have any questions or need assistance with any state-related matters.